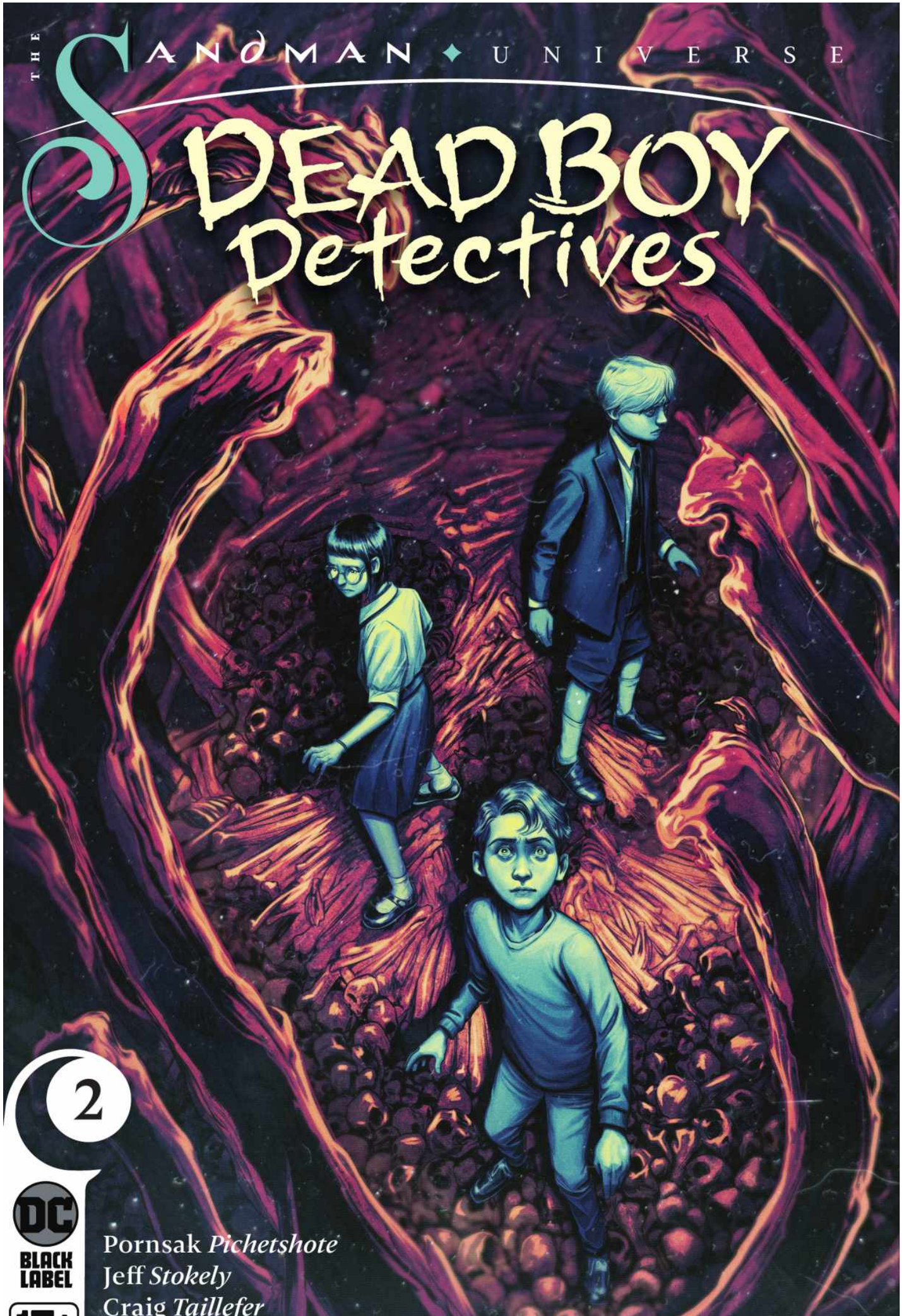
THE SANDMAN UNIVERSE
DEAD BOY Detectives
2
DC
BLACK LABEL
Pornsak Pichetshote
Jeff Stokely
Craig Taillefer

CELEBRATE BLACK EXCELLENCE ACROSS THE DC UNIVERSE!
DC BLACK HISTORY MONTH
DC POWER
A CELEBRATION
A 100-PAGE ONE-SHOT
OF ALL-NEW STORIES FROM COMICS' TOP ARTISTS AND WRITERS
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WRITTEN BY
CHUCK BROWN, MORGAN HAMPTON, STEPHANIE WILLIAMS, EVAN NARCISSE, BRANDON THOMAS, LAMONT MAGEE, JORDAN CLARK, AND MORE
ART BY
VALENTINE DE LANDRO, CLAYTON HENRY, PETTERSON OLIVEIRA, NATACHA BUSTOS, CHRISCROSS, ALITHA MARTINEZ, DARRYL BANKS, AND MORE
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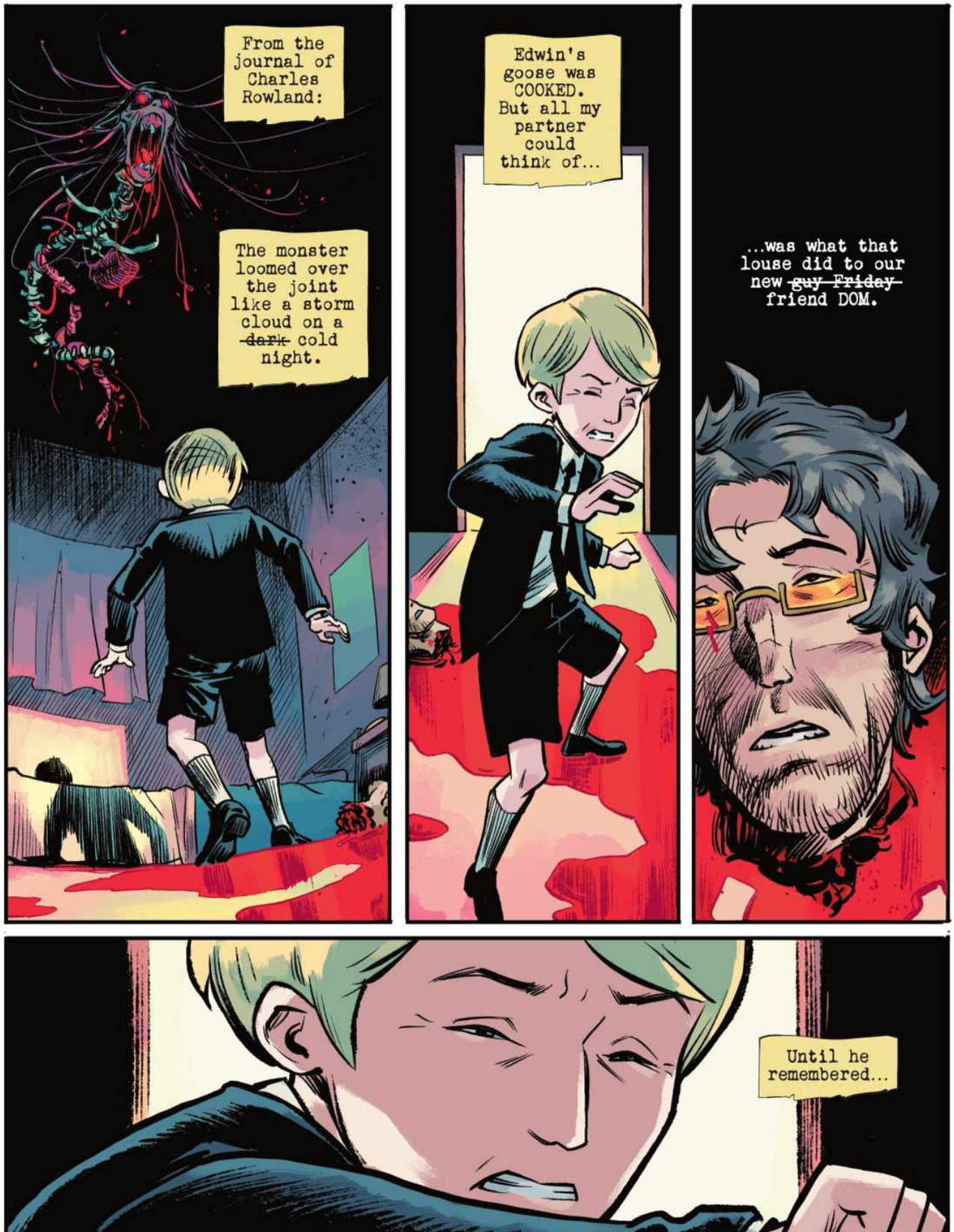
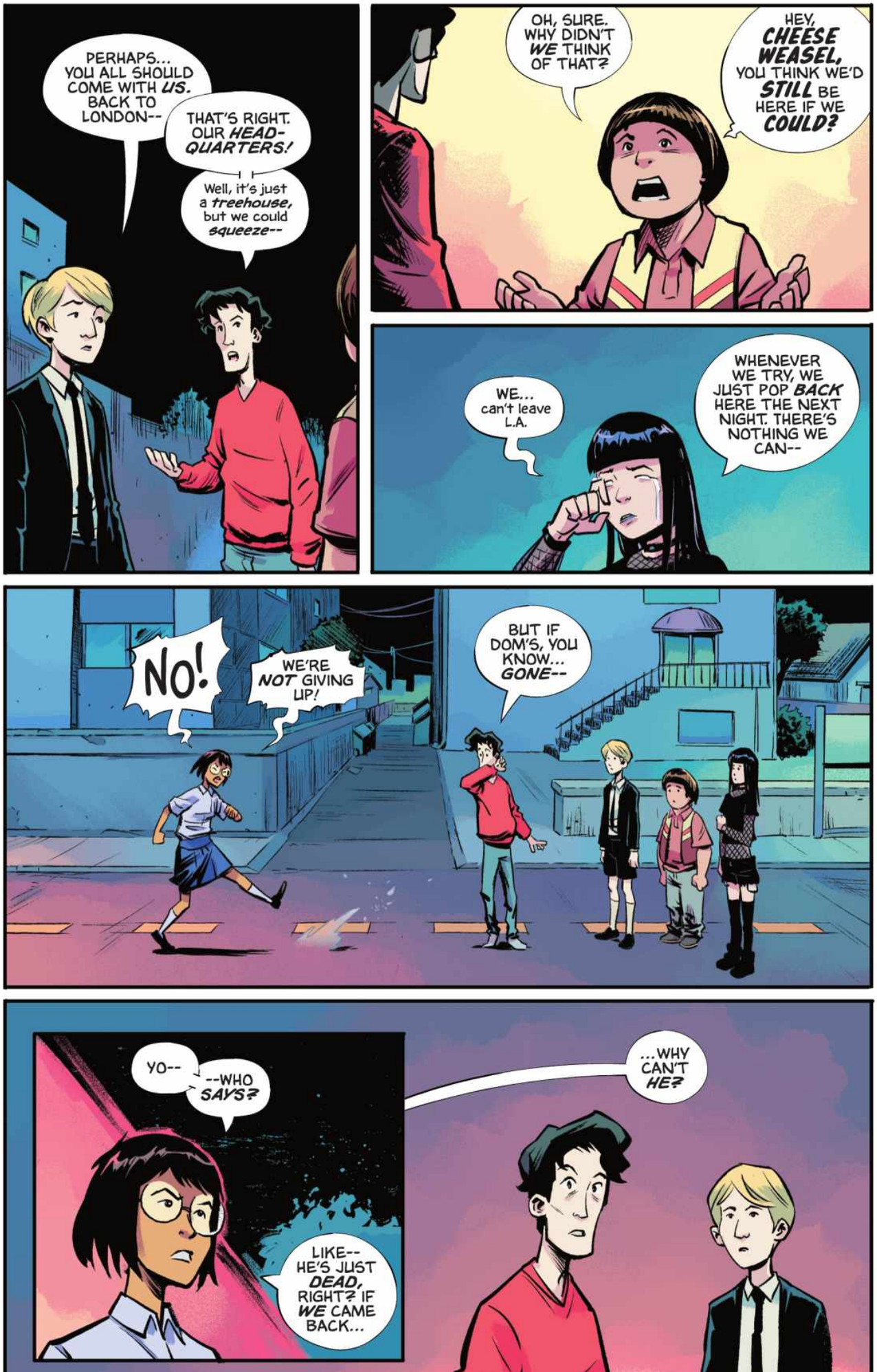
CHAPTER FIVE:
WHO SAYS?


From the journal of Charles Rowland:
The monster loomed over the joint like a storm cloud on a ~~dark~~ cold night.
Edwin's goose was COOKED. But all my partner could think of...
...was what that louse did to our new ~~guy Friday~~ friend DOM.
Until he remembered...

...you can't KILL a DEAD boy.
Only DEATH HERSELF could get rid of us.
Which meant when night fell and our Thai friends rematerialized, we had to run before Death came for Dom--and grabbed US too.
The others looked to JAI--the oldest--for a plan, but she was still shocked.
MELVIN said we should "call 'em out," but no one was quite sure who we'd call.
And the dame--TANYA...
...watching that pretty girl cry played with my HEART.
Meanwhile, my partner...
...he...
Gosh, I really hoped Edwin was okay.


PERHAPS... YOU ALL SHOULD COME WITH US. BACK TO LONDON--
THAT'S RIGHT. OUR HEAD-QUARTERS!
Well, it's just a treehouse, but we could squeeze--
OH, SURE. WHY DIDN'T WE THINK OF THAT?
HEY, CHEESE WEASEL, YOU THINK WE'D STILL BE HERE IF WE COULD?
WE... can't leave L.A.
WHENEVER WE TRY, WE JUST POP BACK HERE THE NEXT NIGHT. THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN--
NO!
WE'RE NOT GIVING UP!
BUT IF DOM'S, YOU KNOW... GONE--
YO--
--WHO SAYS?
LIKE-- HE'S JUST DEAD, RIGHT? IF WE CAME BACK...
...WHY CAN'T HE?

THE SANDMAN UNIVERSE

DEAD BOY Detectives

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1:25 variant cover DAVE JOHNSON

OUR STORY SO FAR:

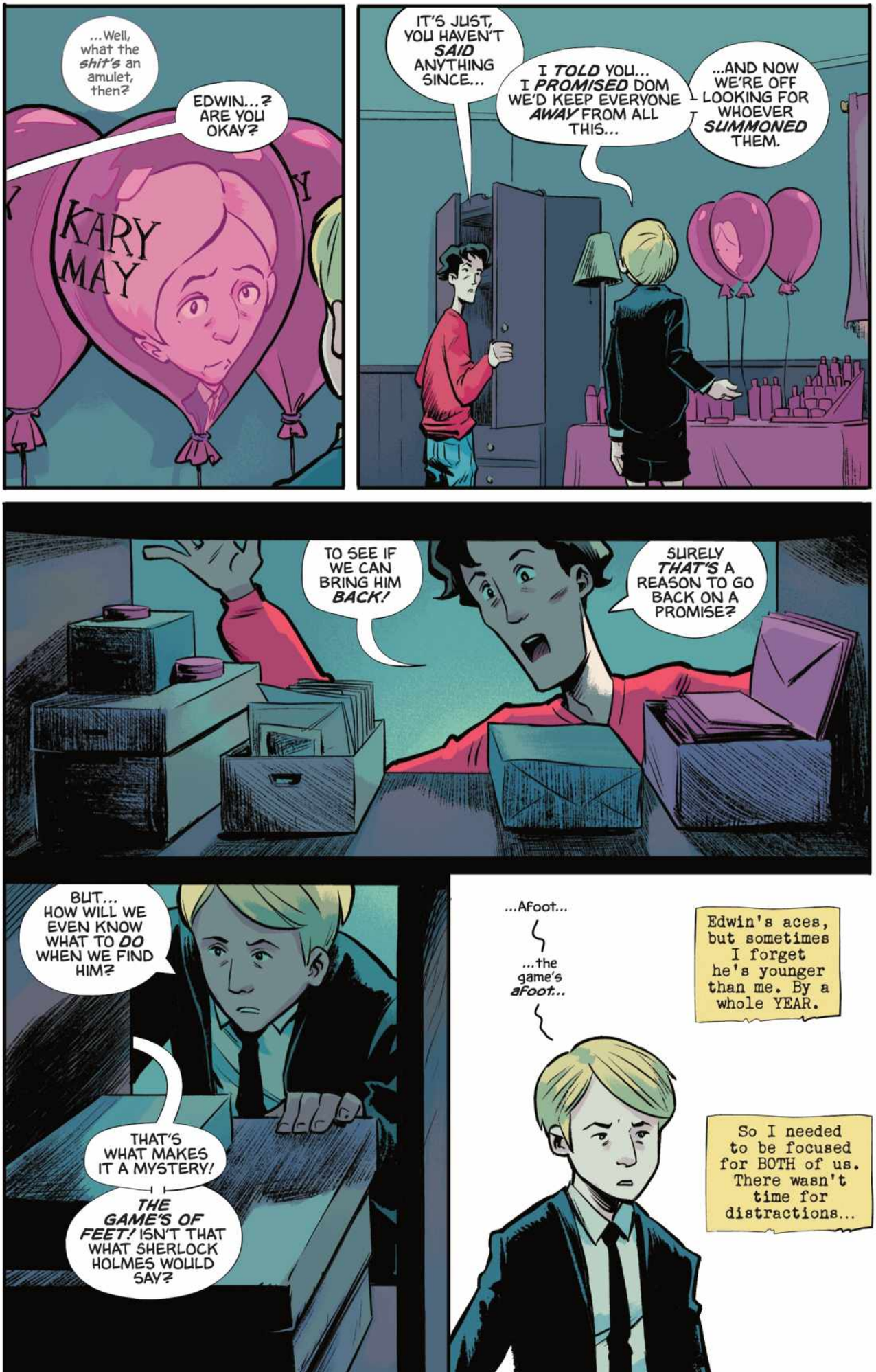
Edwin and Charles--the ghosts of two British children who love playing detective--were visiting Los Angeles, where a boy hired them to find his neighbor Jai, a teenage Thai-American.

But the boys discovered her dead, manifesting as a nocturnal Thai ghost alongside two others from different eras--Tanya (the '90s) and Melvin (the '70s). Realizing Thai ghosts shouldn't be able to manifest in America, Dom--a local ghost doctor--sought answers, vowing to protect the boys.

Right before a different ghost killed him.

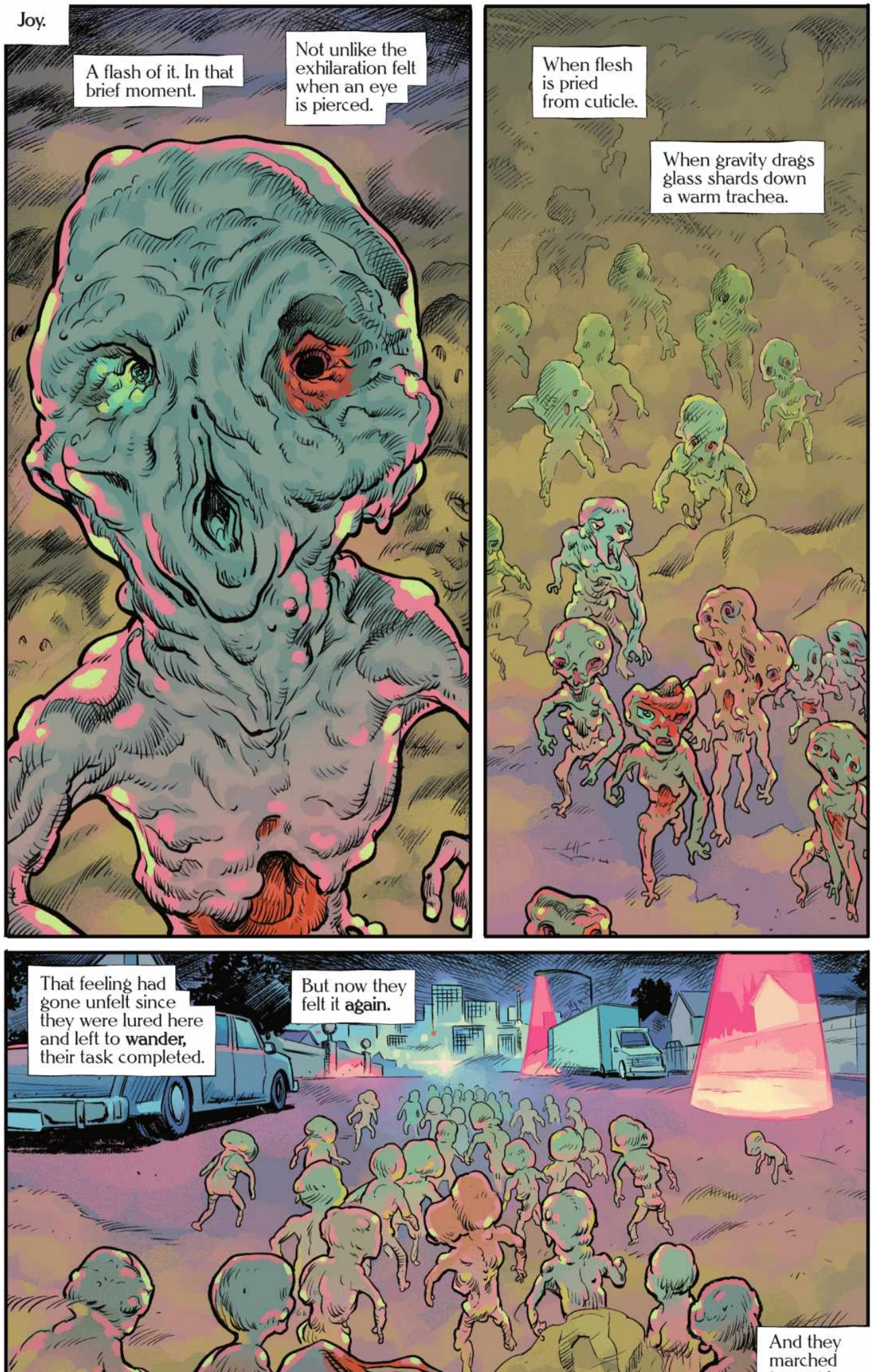
CHAPTER SIX:
THE PINK HOUSE

Before he croaked, the others said Dom was hunting an AMULET he thought was connected to them. He believed friends of Tanya's folks had it.
Okay, wait... wait...
Since adults couldn't normally see or hear us, Edwin and I were natural snoops. But this time we needed help...
ALL CLEAR! GO!
Cuz THAI amulets apparently looked different from Chinese or Japanese or, um, other-ese ones...
Ha! First try! Amulet!
Who's your boy?
Bro.
That's a necklace.
It's an amulet.
Necklace.
Amulet.
An amulet hangs from a necklace.
No, that's a locket.
Yeah, like this.


...Well, what the *shit's* an amulet, then?
EDWIN...? ARE YOU OKAY?
KARY MAY
IT'S JUST, YOU HAVEN'T *SAID* ANYTHING SINCE...
I *TOLD* YOU... I *PROMISED* DOM WE'D KEEP EVERYONE *AWAY* FROM ALL THIS...
...AND NOW WE'RE OFF LOOKING FOR WHOEVER *SUMMONED* THEM.
TO SEE IF WE CAN BRING HIM *BACK!*
SURELY *THAT'S* A REASON TO GO BACK ON A PROMISE?
BUT... HOW WILL WE EVEN KNOW WHAT TO *DO* WHEN WE FIND HIM?
THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT A MYSTERY!
THE GAME'S OF FEET! ISN'T THAT WHAT SHERLOCK HOLMES WOULD SAY?
...AFoot...
...the game's *aFoot...*
Edwin's aces, but sometimes I forget he's younger than me. By a whole YEAR.
So I needed to be focused for BOTH of us. There wasn't time for distractions...

...no matter HOW pretty they were.
Is *this* an amulet?
That's a *pendant.*
SERIOUSLY! WHAT THE FUCK'S AN AMULET?!
Shhhh!
YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?
THIS WAS AN *HEIRLOOM* OF YOUR MOTHER'S?
YEAH, MOM MADE THIS *HUGE* DEAL ABOUT IT BEING SO SPECIAL.
THAT'S BECAUSE IT'S A *DEATH AMULET.* AND IT *TOTALLY* COULD'VE BROUGHT YOU KIDS BACK.
...What?
DO YOU KNOW WHO INHERITED YOUR *STUFF* AFTER YOUR FOLKS PASSED?
LIKE--NEIGHBORS? *OTHER* FAMILY? *FRIENDS?*
CUZ I *GUARANTEE* YOU. IF THEY HAD *THIS?*
THEIR CRIB'S *LOADED* WITH OTHER THAI CHARMS.
I JUST NEED A *LIST* OF WHO YOUR PARENTS KNEW. CHECK OUT THEIR SPOTS... SEE *OTHER* CHARMS THERE?
BOOM. *THAT'S* WHO BROUGHT YOU GUYS BACK.
BUT... I NEVER PAID *ATTENTION* TO THEIR FRIENDS.

MOM AND DAD'D TRY TO MAKE ME, BUT...
:sigh:
THEY DIDN'T EVEN LIKE THEIR FRIENDS! THEY WERE ALWAYS COMPLAINING. I NEVER GOT WHY THEY ALL HUNG OUT.
WELL, YOU'RE FROM THE NINETIES, RIGHT?
I'M GUESSING PEOPLE PROBABLY MISTOOK YOU FOR CHINESE OR TAIWANESE ALL THE TIME...
I MEAN-- EVEN NOW-- THAILAND'S SUCH A SMALL COUNTRY, WHENEVER PEOPLE TALK ABOUT ANYTHING THAI-- IT'S MOSTLY FOOD. NEVER THE PEOPLE.
NEVER THE PEOPLE.
AND SOMETIMES... WELL, YOU'LL FORGIVE A LOT TO BE AROUND PEOPLE WHO GO THROUGH WHAT YOU DO.
IF YOU'RE LUCKY? SOMEWHERE IN ALL THAT... YOU FIND SURVIVAL.
"AND IF YOU'RE REALLY LUCKY..."
OKAY, OKAY...
"...YOU FIND FAMILY."
...BACK IN A SECOND!

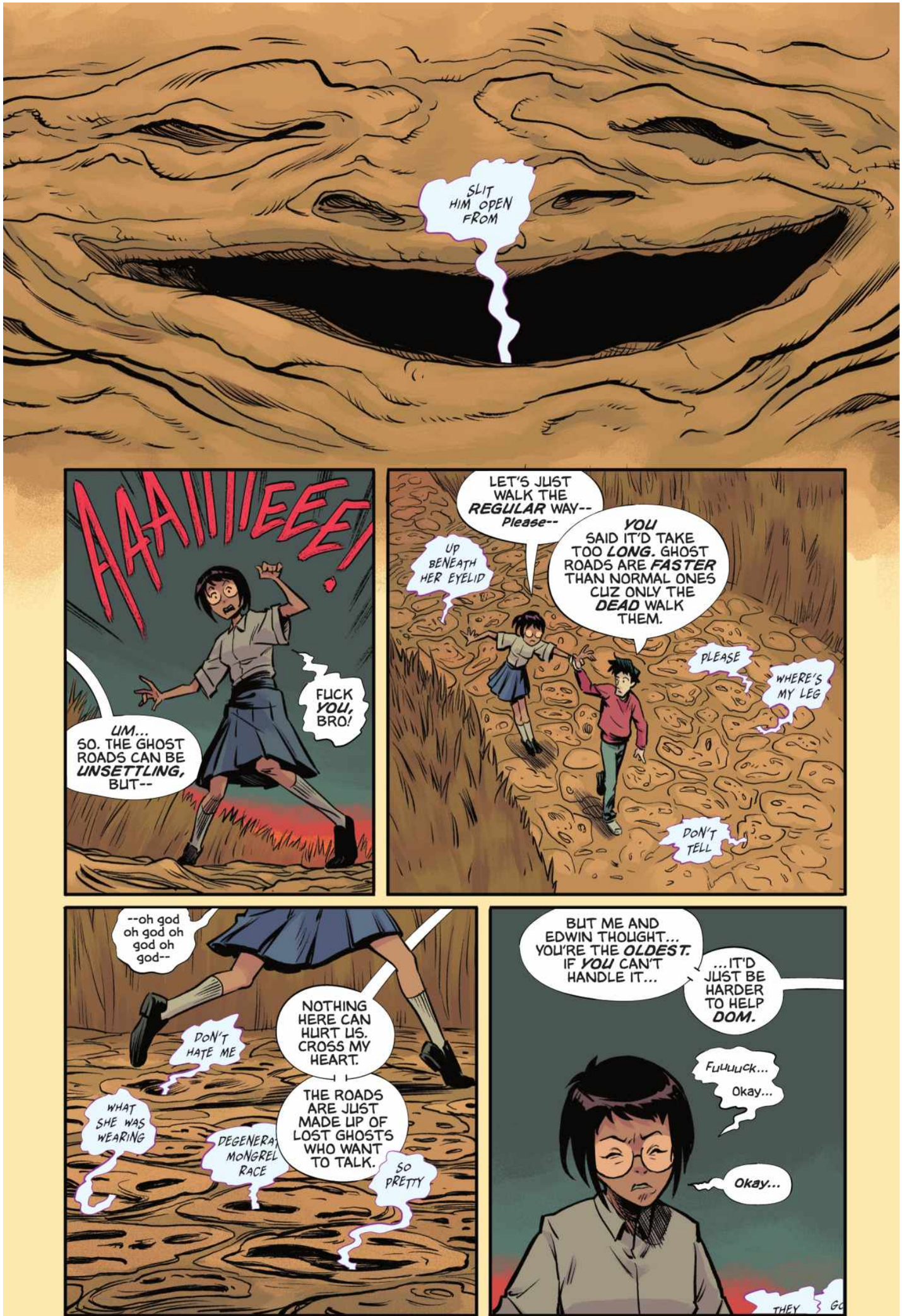

Joy.
A flash of it. In that brief moment.
Not unlike the exhilaration felt when an eye is pierced.
When flesh is pried from cuticle.
When gravity drags glass shards down a warm trachea.
That feeling had gone unfelt since they were lured here and left to **wander,** their task completed.
But now they felt it **again.**
And they marched

The trail had gone cold at the pink house.
So I squooshed back to Dom's to see if the coast was clear. And since the police had taken away his body--

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU DON'T REMEMBER?!
HEY! DON'T YELL AT HER!
Tanya only had one other lead, which she was even LESS sure about. And it was almost sunrise.
Jai thought we should split up to save time (and she was really tired of Melvin).

Since some of Dom's journals were in English, and Edwin's a wiz at book stuff...
...he'd help see if there was anything else to jog Tanya's memory.
Me and Jai'd investigate the next place--

--but it was really far away. Really, REALLY far away.
And since Jai couldn't squoosh...
...that only left ONE option.


SLIT HIM OPEN FROM
AAAIIIIEEE!
UM... SO. THE GHOST ROADS CAN BE UNSETTLING, BUT--
FUCK YOU, BRO!
LET'S JUST WALK THE REGULAR WAY-- Please--
YOU SAID IT'D TAKE TOO LONG. GHOST ROADS ARE FASTER THAN NORMAL ONES CUZ ONLY THE DEAD WALK THEM.
UP BENEATH HER EYELID
PLEASE
WHERE'S MY LEG
DON'T TELL
--oh god oh god oh god oh god--
DON'T HATE ME
NOTHING HERE CAN HURT US. CROSS MY HEART.
WHAT SHE WAS WEARING
DEGENERATE MONGREL RACE
THE ROADS ARE JUST MADE UP OF LOST GHOSTS WHO WANT TO TALK.
SO PRETTY
BUT ME AND EDWIN THOUGHT... YOU'RE THE OLDEST. IF YOU CAN'T HANDLE IT...
...IT'D JUST BE HARDER TO HELP DOM.
Fuuuuck...
Okay...
Okay...
THEY

STAY HERE
JUST IGNORE THE VOICES. WE CAN TALK ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE.
And, um, maybe don't look down.
TALK... ABOUT WHAT?
HE MADE ME SWALLOW MY
JUST NEED SOMEONE TO LISTEN
WELL... WHEN TIMMY HIRED US, HE SAID YOUR PARENTS MISS
HEY-- ARE YOU INTO TANYA OR WHAT?
WH-WHAT?!
YO, I SEE HOW YOU LOOK AT HER.
IT--IT'S NOTHING...
DON'T LIE.
FUNNY BUNNY
DIDN'T THINK THE BOY WOULD
NO, IT'S JUST... WHEN I LIKE SOMEONE, THINGS USUALLY... GO WRONG.
Usually, like always.
THINKS SHE STILL LOVES ME
WHY? CUZ YOU'RE DEAD? COME ON-- SO'S TANYA!
THEY GLUED ME
BUT... I DIED ALMOST THIRTY YEARS AGO...

But if we weren't, it would ~~mean being even more alone~~ be so disappointing.
BRO! SO DID SHE!
YOU TWO ARE FATED!
I DON'T KNOW... I MEAN, YOU GUYS CAN'T LEAVE LOS ANGELES, AND--
Brooooo...
SHOOT.
YOUR.
SHOT.
AND IF SHE'S NOT INTO YOU, THEN YOU CAN MOVE ON.
BUT STAYING HUNG UP ON IT...
SAID IT WAS OUR SECRET
NEVER GUESSED HE WAS EATING HER
AND REMEMBER WHAT DOM SAID? THINGS MIGHT BE CHANGING FOR GHOSTS. THE WORLD MIGHT BE CHANGING.
AND DOM THOUGHT THAI BLACK MAGIC MIGHT BE WHY.
IT'S WHY US THAI GHOSTS ARE BACK.
THAT'S WHY IF WE FIND WHOEVER BROUGHT US BACK--
--NOT JUST US-- MAYBE EVERYTHING COULD BE DIFFERENT.
WE JUST GOTTA GET INTO THIS BLACK MAGIC SHIT.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
THIS BLACK MAGIC SHIT

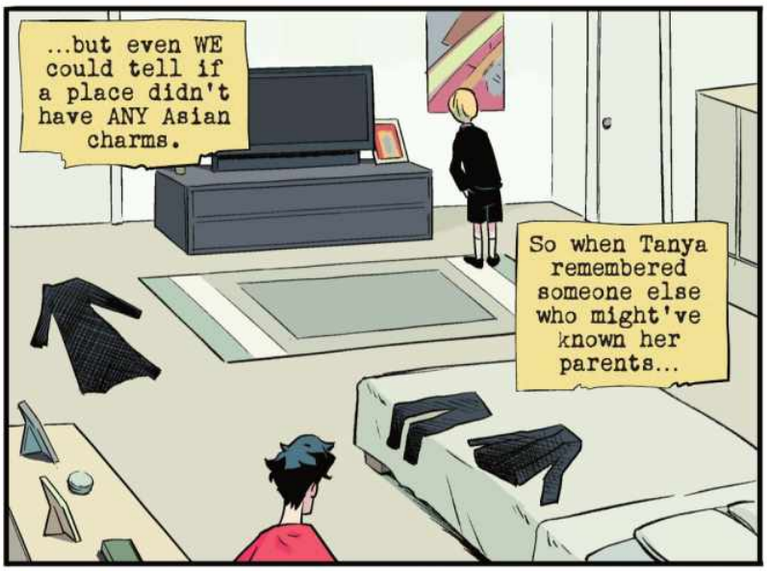
ACTUALLY, uh... NO.
SORRY... JUST ME. NOT A MONSTER.
OR, you know, NOT AN EVIL ONE.
Hah.
Uh, I WAS OUT BACK READING AND WANTED TO GRAB ANOTHER NOTEBOOK...
AND, uh, NAK MOTHER GHOSTS, WE CAN STRETCH OUR ARMS, CUZ...um...
:sigh:
I DON'T EVEN KNOW.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
...
YOU KNOW, WHEN I WAS ALIVE? WHEN I COULD CHOOSE BETWEEN PAD THAI AND SPAGHETTI? I ALWAYS CHOSE SPAGHETTI.
AND I CAN'T READ ANY OF THE BIG THAI WORDS IN THIS.
AND I DIDN'T PAY ATTENTION TO MOM AND DAD OR THEIR FRIENDS.
...AND NOW I'M WHY DOM'S DEAD.
WHAT? THAT'S NOT TRUE--
IT'S TRUE I RUIN EVERYTHING.
IT'S TRUE I'M WHY MY MOM AND DAD DIED. WHY NOT DOM TOO?

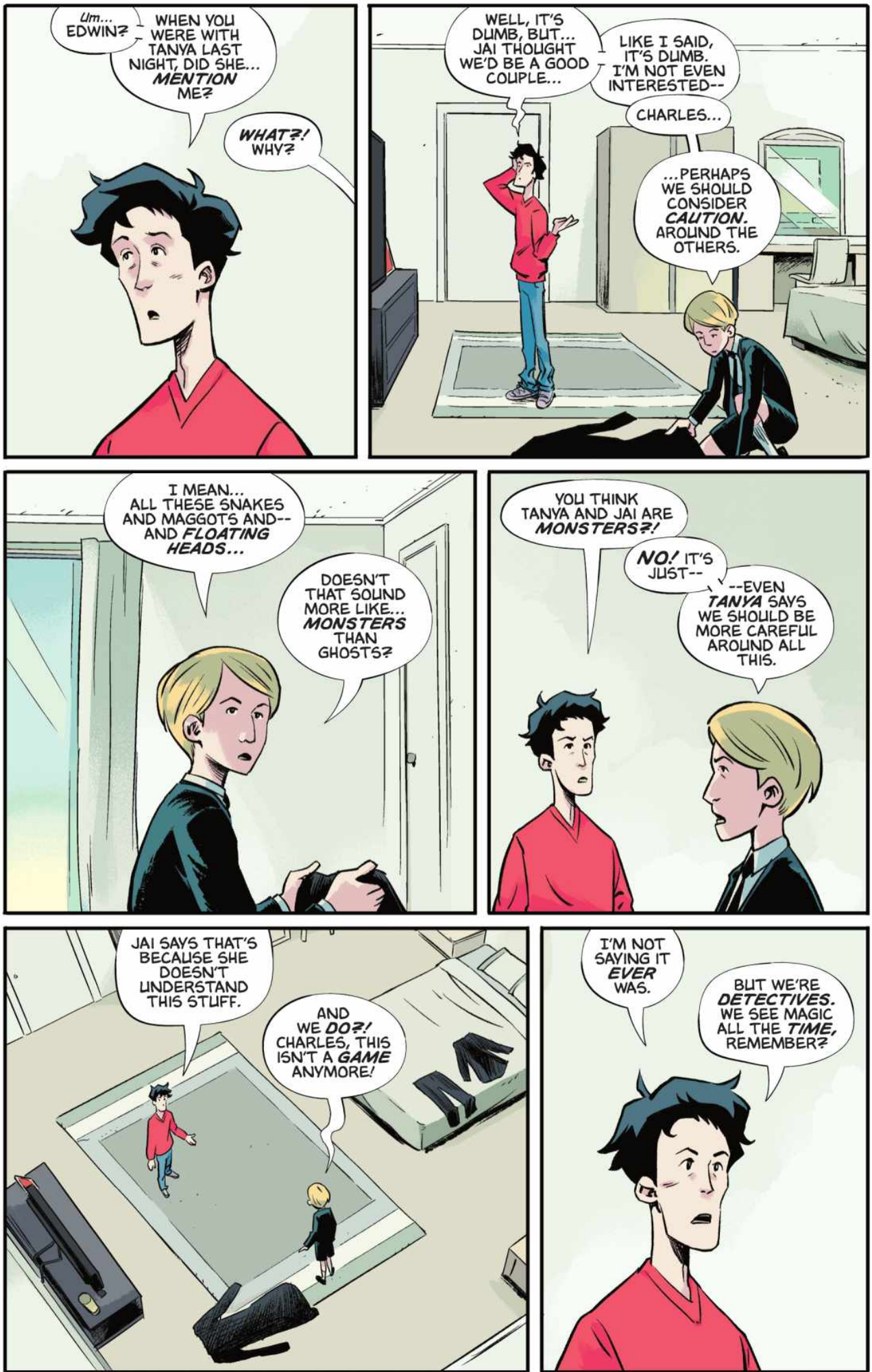
WHY WOULD YOU THINK THAT?
MOM AND DAD WERE ALWAYS ON MY CASE. ABOUT HOW I DRESSED, MY FRIENDS...
"...THEY THOUGHT WE WERE WORSHIPPING SATAN! WHY? CUZ WE LISTENED TO THE CURE?!
AND THEN ONE DAY... THEY'D JUST HAD IT. THEY WERE LIKE, "WE'RE MOVING TO THAILAND!"
I'D NEVER EVEN BEEN TO THAILAND!
YOU KNOW THERE ARE PLACES WITHOUT TOILETS THERE?! LIKE, RESTAURANTS!
"AND YOU HAVE TO BE CAREFUL GETTING INTO TAXIS CUZ DRIVERS MIGHT KIDNAP YOU!
"AND THERE'S LEPERS. AND THAT'S 'WHERE WE BELONGED'?
"AND I WAS LIKE, THIS IS OUR HOME, AND IT WASN'T FAIR, AND I HATED THEM, AND DAD GOT SO MAD HE TURNED AROUND AND--"

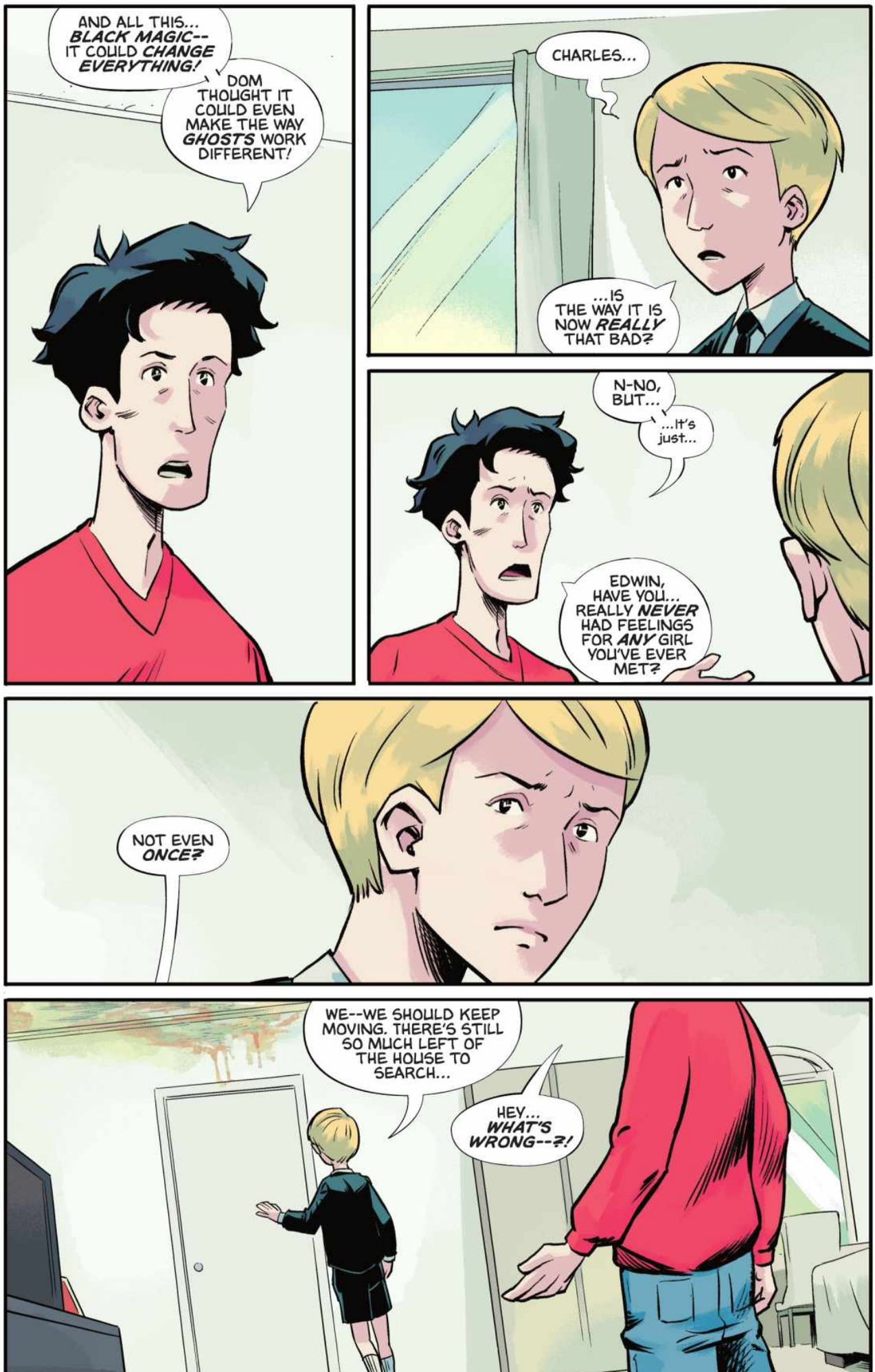
THAI SUPERSTITIONS FREAKED MOM *OUT.* SHE SAID IF THE WRONG PEOPLE FUCKED WITH THEM...
...THEY'D FUCK *BACK.*
AND *I'M* THE WRONG PEOPLE.
ME.
BUT DOM'S GONNA STAY *DEAD* IF I DON'T AND I CAN BARELY *READ* THAI--
And I'm just so fucking *dumb*--
HEY, DON'T--
Um...
...how come I can *touch you?*
OH, SOMETIMES WHEN *WE* TOUCH THINGS, *OTHER* THINGS CAN TOUCH US *BACK.*
BUT, *um,* IF YOU'RE UNCOMFORTABLE--
NO.
UNLESS *YOU'RE* UNCOMFORTABLE...
...*Um...*
...no.

CHAPTER EIGHT:
THE BRAINSTORM

Jai and I didn't find anything during our search, but that's when my partner had a brainstorm!
WE might not know the difference between Thai and other Asian jewelry...


...but even WE could tell if a place didn't have ANY Asian charms.
So when Tanya remembered someone else who might've known her parents...


Um... EDWIN?
WHEN YOU WERE WITH TANYA LAST NIGHT, DID SHE... MENTION ME?
WHAT?! WHY?
WELL, IT'S DUMB, BUT... JAI THOUGHT WE'D BE A GOOD COUPLE...
LIKE I SAID, IT'S DUMB. I'M NOT EVEN INTERESTED--
CHARLES...
...PERHAPS WE SHOULD CONSIDER CAUTION. AROUND THE OTHERS.
I MEAN... ALL THESE SNAKES AND MAGGOTS AND-- AND FLOATING HEADS...
DOESN'T THAT SOUND MORE LIKE... MONSTERS THAN GHOSTS?
YOU THINK TANYA AND JAI ARE MONSTERS?!
NO! IT'S JUST--
--EVEN TANYA SAYS WE SHOULD BE MORE CAREFUL AROUND ALL THIS.
JAI SAYS THAT'S BECAUSE SHE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THIS STUFF.
AND WE DO?! CHARLES, THIS ISN'T A GAME ANYMORE!
I'M NOT SAYING IT EVER WAS.
BUT WE'RE DETECTIVES. WE SEE MAGIC ALL THE TIME, REMEMBER?


AND ALL THIS... BLACK MAGIC-- IT COULD CHANGE EVERYTHING!
DOM THOUGHT IT COULD EVEN MAKE THE WAY GHOSTS WORK DIFFERENT!
CHARLES...
...IS THE WAY IT IS NOW REALLY THAT BAD?
N-NO, BUT...
...IT'S just...
EDWIN, HAVE YOU... REALLY NEVER HAD FEELINGS FOR ANY GIRL YOU'VE EVER MET?
NOT EVEN ONCE?
WE--WE SHOULD KEEP MOVING. THERE'S STILL SO MUCH LEFT OF THE HOUSE TO SEARCH...
HEY... WHAT'S WRONG--?!

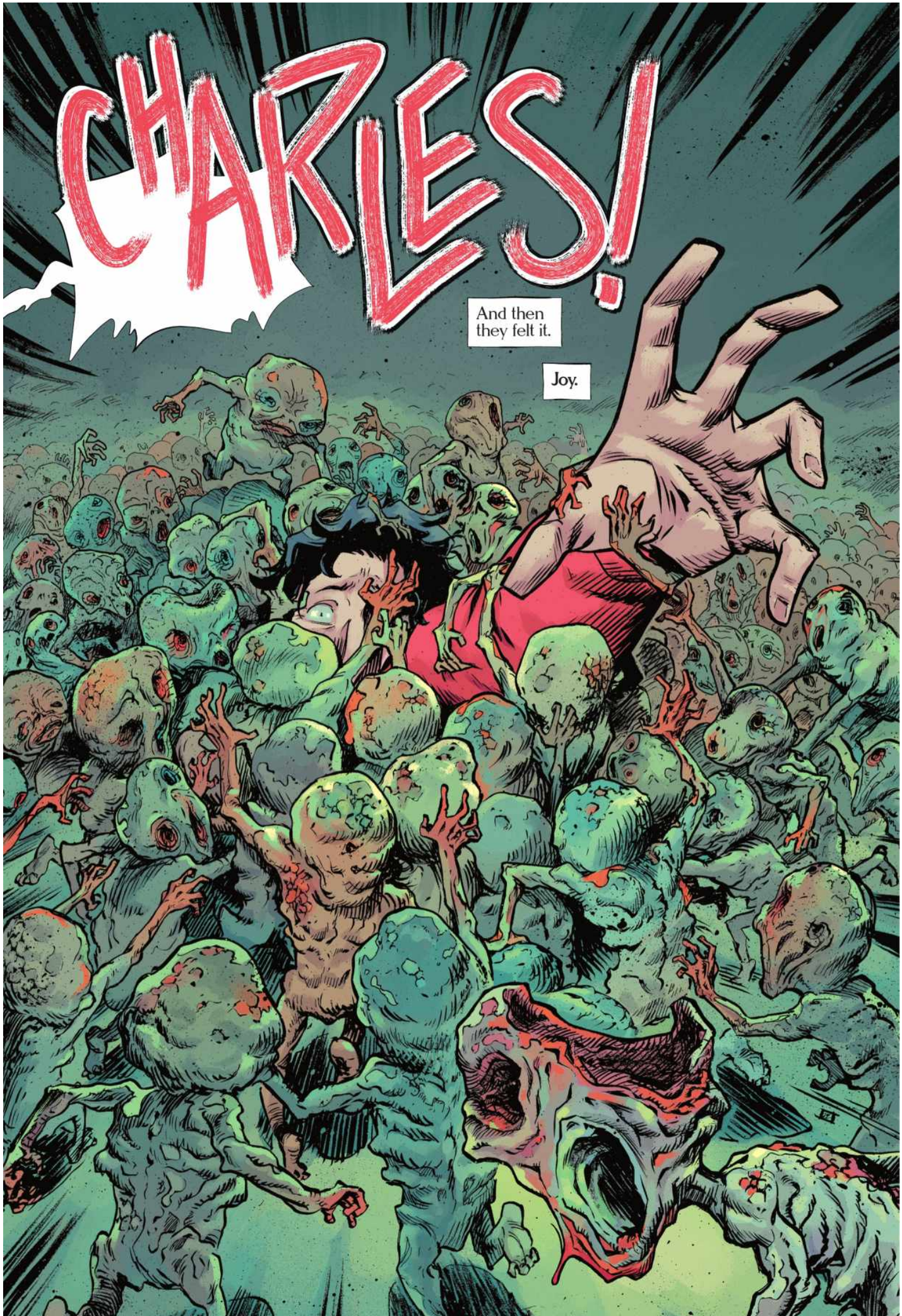
Finally, they arrived.
At joy.
At what promised to quell the burning in their bellies.
WHAT-- WHAT ARE--?
RUN!

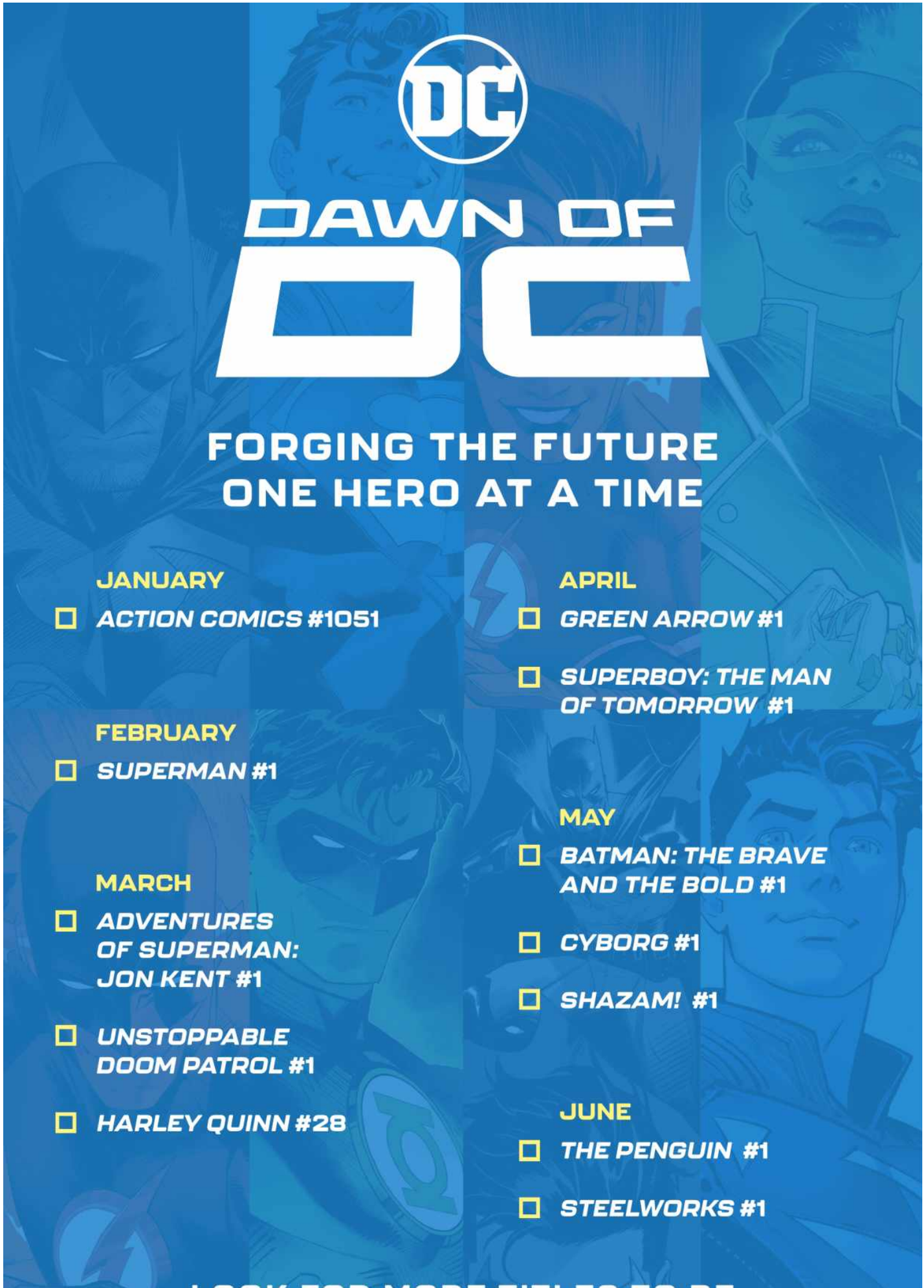
Out of terror, the two ran.
Perhaps they felt-- in the **bones** that had long been buried-- that something had changed.
LOOK OUT! OVER THERE!

Something **fundamental.**
And so it was only **after** their feet scurried that the boys remembered--

--they were **dead.**

Edwin and Charles couldn't be touched. The boys could **never** be touched. So long as the two **desired** it.
So surely,


CHARLES!
And then they felt it.
Joy.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FORGING THE FUTURE ONE HERO AT A TIME
A YEARLONG STORYTELLING INITIATIVE
DC
DAWN OF DC
NEW EPIC SERIES
NEW CREATIVE TEAMS
NEW BATTLES TO FIGHT
ART BY DAN MORA

DC NATION SPOTLIGHT ON

DAWN OF DC

DC is embarking on a yearlong storytelling event, Dawn of DC. Following the events of *Dark Crisis on Infinite Earths* and DC Universe: Lazarus Planet, the world's superheroes have emerged from the biggest, most devastating battles of their lives and are reinvigorated in their fights against evil. With bold new directions for DC's biggest characters, Dawn of DC is an easy entry point for both lifelong readers and those picking up a comic for the first time to dive into the new stories.

"After the near-Multiverse-ending events in *Dark Crisis on Infinite Earths* and DC Universe: Lazarus Planet, the DC Universe will be heading toward the light," said DC publisher and chief creative officer Jim Lee. "With brand-new series and story arcs from some of the top creative members in comics, Dawn of DC is one of our most ambitious initiatives ever and is a chance for us to tell bigger and bolder stories across our line."

MORE THAN 20 NEW COMICS SERIES WILL LAUNCH THROUGHOUT 2023—HERE'S A LOOK AT THE FIRST HALF OF THE YEAR!

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Action Comics #1051

FEBRUARY 2023

Superman #1

MARCH 2023

Adventures of Superman: Jon Kent #1

Unstoppable Doom Patrol #1

Harley Quinn #28

ARIL 2023

Green Arrow #1

Superboy: The Man of Tomorrow #1

MAY 2023

Batman: The Brave and the Bold #1

Cyborg #1

Shazam! #1

JUNE 2023

The Penguin #1

Steelworks #1

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